

Letter from F. B. Perkins to Alexander Graham Bell, December 8, 1871, with transcript

Copied from a collection of "Biographical Material" in "Dr. Bell's Room." Copy of a letter from the Secretary of the American Social Science Association, relative to the publication and distribution of an Address delivered by Alexander Graham Bell. Later the Address was revised and published in full in the popular Magazine Old and New, for July, 1872, under the title of "The Nature and Uses of Visible Speech." Copy of Address in "Dr. Bell's Room." American Social Science Association. 13 Pemberton Square, Boston. December 8th, 1871. Prof. A. Graham Bell: Dear Sir:

I address you on behalf of Dr. S. Eliot, President of this Association, and J. S. Blatchford Esq., its Treasurer, in order to express somewhat more fully than could be done by the vote of the Education Committee of the Association on Monday last, their high sense of the very remarkable scientific truth and clearness and great practical value of the system of Visible Speech set forth by you at that time.

It seems to them that this system is an exhaustive method of registering whatever sounds the organs of speech can produce by means of a system of signs which represent to the eye with singular closeness and clearness the actual positions and uses of those organs; and that the flexibility, simplicity and obviousness of the system must render it an instrument of great power and usefulness in comparative and historical philology, in the analysis and development of the theory of language, in vocalization, elocution and the training of the voice generally, and in all those branches of education in language where partial or entire loss of faculties requires special instruction, as in the case of deaf mutes, stammering, etc.

In these opinions, I take the liberty of adding that I fully coincide.

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If it should be your opinion that the distribution of an exposition of the system of Visible Speech by this Association will be of any assistance to you and if you will draw up a short account and explanation of it in a form united to popular use, we shall have great pleasure in printing and distributing an edition of it, and in incorporating it subsequently in our transactions.

With much respect,

Your obedient Servant, F. B. Perkins. Secretary.